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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

28 February 1968

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Soviets Open Substantive Debates at Budapest Meeting

Yesterday the sparring and feinting ended at the Budapest preparatory meeting when the leader of the USSR's delegation, Mikhail Suslov, called for an International Communist Conference (ICC) in Moscow this November or December. Although some delegates in their responses left room to discuss their positions on this question, the bulk of the comments were favorable to convening a meeting "in late fall". The only qualifications were voiced by the Rumanians who insisted that all parties should attend such a conference and that some form of participation should be provided for noncommunist progressive parties. (The Rumanian qualifications would virtually negate any possibility of holding an ICC in the foreseeable future.) The communique issued at the end of business yesterday made no concessions to progressive parties attendance at an ICC and, although it stated all parties would be invited, the communique insisted that the ICC was not dependent on universal attendance. In another move which will cause even wider dissention among the adherents of independence or polycentrism, Zenon Kliszko, the Polish delegation head, proposed the creation of a standing preparatory committee reminiscent of the Cominform and Comintern type control bodies. (See Polish article below)

The Yugoslav domestic service reports that a compromise on control of publicity has been reached which will allow individual delegations some initiative in voicing their views to the press, however, the daily communique will remain the main source of official information. (UNCL)

Poles Call for Preparatory Commission at Budapest

The head of the Polish delegation at the Budapest meeting, Zenon Kliszko, called for the "setting up of a commission for the organizational preparation" of a world Communist conference. Kliszko's call was supported by the Soviet delegate who said the "preparatory commission should be set up in the course of the present meeting in Budapest."

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COMMENT: This appears to confirm long circulating rumors in Warsaw that the Poles would call for some form of international organization to be set up during the Budapest meeting, which might be headed by Polish party boss Gomulka. Since the world conference may well be long in coming, if it is ever held, any "preparatory commission" would soon become a de facto permanent body.

According to the rumors, the naming of Gomulka to head it would among other things, be a graceful way of easing him out of his domestic policy functions.

It remains to be seen whether the proposal gets off the ground, since at least the Rumanians will realize its implications and are certain to oppose it. [REDACTED]

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Low Level Albanian Purge in Progress

A low level purge of party dissidents is in progress in the Durres district of Albania, according to a 10 February article in Zeri I Popullit, by Rita Marko, 1st Secretary of the district. Marko's article attacks "backward communists" who harbor "alien" (Soviet?) remnants and become an obstacle to revolutionizing the masses, and names persons who have recently been expelled from the party for such reasons. Marko further warns that there are also secretaries "of basic organizations or directors, who in their work have not relied on the masses, causing great damage to the work." [REDACTED]

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COMMENT: While there were rumors of discontent and associated low level party expulsions throughout 1967, this is the first open criticism of party members by name, at any level, in over a year. The fact that Marko is also a member of the politiburo and vice president of the People's Assembly adds weight to his thinly veiled warnings against bureaucratism, indifference, and "all alien" concepts. This highly unusual open acknowledgement by a regime official that a purge is in progress gives rise to speculation that these events could be a prelude to more extensive expulsion's throughout Albania, perhaps reaching into the upper levels of the party/government hierarchy.

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Czechoslovak Olympic Ice Hockey Team Honored

New party boss Dubcek decorated the hockey team with medals for "outstanding work" during a reception on 24 February. [REDACTED]

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COMMENT: The team's victory over the favored Russians has been a visible source of joy to the Czechoslovaks. After television broadcasts of the game were completed, the streets

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of many cities and towns were filled throughout the night with excited, happy people, according to the Czechoslovak Press Agency, Dubcek has been cashing in on this popular sentiment. He sent an immediate telegram of congratulations to the team, and later mentioned their exploits in his speeches.

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